

Fredericksburg Arts Commission

Minutes

Jan 6, 2011

Members present: Kevin Bartram, Roy Jarnecke, Patrick A'hearn, Pat Thalman, George Solley, Florence Ridderhof, Debby Klein, Ellen Killough, Rochelle Grey, and Kerry Devine. Absent: Julie Perry.

President, Kevin Bartram called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

He expressed the condolences of the Commission to Julie Perry and family upon the passing of her father.

Minutes of the December meeting were read and approved without correction.

Kevin welcomed guests Michael Theis, editor of the Patch.com online newsletter. He welcomed Dana Herlong, our liaison to the EDA, and Richard Tremblay, Economic Manager for the city of Fredericksburg, and the person who shepherded the Arts and Cultural District ordinance through City Council. Richard was present to 'walk' us through the ordinance.

Providing hard copies for everyone, Mr. Tremblay explained the meaning and intent of each part of the ordinance, said that it can also be found on the city website, and that applications to businesses who would qualify for the tax break under the ordinance will be notified immediately.

He explained that the state allowed this type ordinance about a year ago with local discretion granted as to how great the tax incentive would be per locale. For new businesses, under this ordinance, the BPOL tax would begin in the 6th year of operation thus giving them time to renovate, build and grow. City permit fees are also waived up to a certain amount. Non arts businesses can obtain a \$250 tax credit on their Business license tax for 5 years via the applications as approved by the City Manager. About 50 blocks of the city are included in this district which is, incidentally, larger than the historic district. This incentive begins with the Jan 2011 year, businesses must resubmit after 5 years for further approval, but if they pay taxes regularly they could expect to receive the tax credit. Applications will be distributed next week.

We have done more than other cities in the state, we think, as we encourage forward-looking b arts business. Even though some criticism has been voiced, this tax incentive of \$250 was set to impact the least on city budgets By the way; only this type tax can be incentivized.

Also, the EDA has set about 20% of its budget for grants for Arts projects so as to recognize and award businesses and the arts, so together these opportunities benefit the arts in Fredericksburg.

Reports:

Rochelle asked that when any board member presents a researched report, that he or she give the secretary a copy of that report for the records.

Debby reported that no action has been taken on the website to date. Kevin noted that two potential bidders have responded asking for our budget for the website. Debby and the committee will resume work on this project.

Pat reminded us that we voted last meeting to proceed with the purchase of the sculptures from the Foundry for beautification at the waterfront and in Hurkamp Park. She asked whether we should proceed with writing the grant. Meanwhile George will speak with the director of Parks and Rec concerning placement of sculptures in Hurkamp. Landscaping is needed, of course for the sculpture bases. Dana commented that the amount for all three, \$42,500, as shown on the proposal, is almost all the EDA funding that was appropriated for this year – that being about \$50,000. Also, about \$8,000 of that \$50,000 has been encumbered.

After some discussion and explanation as to the appropriateness of the sculpture, and the Commission's desire to not only purchase and place these sculptures in the designated spaces, but also to support strongly the talented, local artist Wegner brothers, it was decided that the grant will be written. However, Kevin questioned whether a group such as the Friends of the Rappahannock might be willing to help sponsor the project, and Mr. Tremblay voiced concern that bids were not let for the project. Also, should the grant request be written for all 3 sculptures? Kevin thanked the committee for its presentation asking them to resume work on the project considering the caveats presented.

Kevin noted that Rick Compton of Via Colori will be in town from Jan 18-20 to meet with civic leaders. Kevin will get back to us with time for the commission to meet with Rick. We are looking ahead to our fall Via Colori event.

Discussion concerning Libertytown and its future with possible ways the Commission might help. We will keep abreast of changes to this important arts business.

Kevin discussed possible scenarios for a Performing Arts Center describing the position of UMW as it views the need for this type center. Kevin is the key contact for UMW on this matter. UMW favors strongly an arts center, but needs outside funding to help move the effort to top

of their list of priorities. George would want to see a performing arts center of at least 250 seats near Libertytown area. More discussion at later meetings.

Debby asked whether the Community foundation would have funds available to assist with the sculpture project. She will consult with Terry McNally about this.

Kevin introduced the idea that we consider naming the Arts District, and prepare a brochure about the district. His vision for the city is to have public art, and a destination for artists of all types and genres. With this ordinance we have the opportunity to begin that effort.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Rochelle Grey